

The Presumptuous SINNER;

Or, A Dialogue between a noble Lord and a poor Woodman.



A Noble Lord of high Renown,
As he was courting up and down,
Through Groves and shady Vallies Green,
By him an aged Man was seen,
With Ax in Hand, cleaving of Wood,
Now as he at his Labour stood,
Ah! Adam, Adam, was his Tone,
Sill as he labour'd all alone.

He sigh'd as if his Heart would break,
And said, at every heavy Stroke,
Ah! Adam, Adam, was his Cries,
Whilst Tears did trickle from his Eyes.

At length behold the noble Peer,
As he these Words did overhear,
Said, Aged Man, pray let me know
Why you do talk of Adam so?

The old Man answer'd him and said,
The laws of God he disobey'd.
By eating the forbidden Fruit,
And thus our Sins at first took Root.

For if that Breach had never been,
We had been blest, and free from Sin,
In that sweet state of Innocence,
But Sorrow came by his Offence.

For Adam's fond Curiosity,
It was ordain'd that he should be,
Opprest by Sorrow, Grief and Pain,
Till he return'd so Earth again.

And I, one of poor Adam's Heirs,
Do earn my Bread with anxious Cares,
And at his Fall I was brought to
This Labour which I now go through.

Why did he not his Wife oppose?
Why did he with the Serpent close?

Why did he on the Apple feed?
Which do so many Sorrows breed?

The Garden was at his Command,
The loaded Branches kiss'd his Hand,
Which he might pull with Pleasure free,
All but that one Forbidden Tree.

The Nobleman he then reply'd,
'Tis true Adam he turn'd aside
From God's Command, and did the Thing
Which does continual Sorrow bring,

Yet don't reflect upon him so,
The very same for ought I know,
Thou might have done to thy Disgrace,
If thou had been in Adam's Place,

No, says he, the Command was great,
Besides that very blessed State.
Of Innocence was free from Care.

We should have liv'd and flourish'd there.
I'd not have touch'd the Tree of Life,
For ever a Serpent, Friend or Wife;
Behold there was enough beside,
If Man could have been satisfy'd.

But Father hear me what I say,
The fruit was Beautiful and gay,
This made him soon consent when woo'd,
To taste of the forbidden Food.
Most Men are of a longing Mind,
Sill as by Law they are confin'd,

From this or that they long the more,
To taste, tho' Death stands at the Door.

Right Worthy Sir, I would have stood
Upon my Guard, for future Good.
And none should e'er have wrought on me,
To taste of the forbidden Tree.

All but that very Tree alone,
The Lord had made all Adam's own,
Which was enough and eke to spare,
What could he not that one forbear.

With that reply'd the noble Lord,
Thou shalt receiv'd a large Reward,
And thou shalt never Work again,
If from one Thing thou wilt abstain,

Thou seem'st to be as poor as Job,
But I'll give thee a Royal Robe,
A Chain of Gold and Palace gay,
While these orders thou must obey.

Thou shalt have honour, Pomp and State,
And like the mighty Potentate,
Musick shall lull thee to thy Rest,
No Heat or Cold shall thee molest,

And every Day I will afford
The best of Food to grace thy Board,
Choice Dainties forty more or less,
But one shall be a cover'd Mess,

That shall be brought to thee each Day,
Among the rest; then took away
Still at the ending of the Feast,
Yet thou shalt touch it in the least.

These just Commands be sure thou keep,
For if thou ventur'st once to peep,
Under the Cover, more or less,
You forfeit all the Happiness.

Said he, my Lord, I do declare,
From Time to Time I will forbear,
Touching that private cov'd Mess,
In any manner more, of less.

Altho' it does before me stand,
I'll never touch it with my Hand,

Nor in the least be fond to see,
What is conceal'd and hid from me.
In all Obedience I'll remain,
You shall not in the least complain;
I'll never do as Adam did,
To taste of that which is forbid.

Then come and follow me I pray,
Henceforth old Father come this Day,
Thou shalt not Labour, carp nor care,
If this one Thing thou dost forbear.

After this noble Lord he goes,
Who stript him of his Leather Clothes,
Then deck'd him like a noble Peer
Of many Thousand Pounds a Year.

His Coach, his Star, his Chain of Gold,
A sumptuous Palace to behold,
With all things to his Heart's Content,
Just for to see this strange Event.

The Lord who had his Promise made,
Did cause him strait to be array'd,
In Robes of rich embroider'd Gold,
And sent him Dishes manifold.

The best that all the Land could yield,
From Forest, Garden, Park, or Field,
With Fishes, Fowls, and all that might
Sweeten his Want and Appetite.

In midst of Joy his Life was led,
And was with curious Dainties fed;
He wanted neither Food nor Mirth,
To make him happy here on Earth.

The Lord allow'd that he shall have,
Whate'er his Heart could wish or crave,
And so he had; but see at last,
How he did all his Glories blast.

For Day by Day still as he din'd,
The cover'd Mess ran in his Mind,
He wants to know what there was hid,
Altho' he knew it was forbid.

Tho' he had plenty at his Board,
What Court and Kingdom could afford,
Yet this one Thing he wants to know,
Which stood before him cover'd so.

His Fancy to that Heigh was grown,
That as he feasted all alone,
Resolv'd he was to satisfy
His foolish fond Curiosity.

With that he rais'd up the Dish,
But there was neither Flesh nor Fish,
But out there jump'd a living Mouse,
Which ran from him across the House.

Which he could not in the least retrieve,
With that he strait began to grieve,

As soon as e'er he saw it run.

He sighing said, I am undone.
A Fault which makes me blush for shame,
I am as much and more to blame
Than Adam was, without Dispute
Who tasted the forbidden Fruit.

Alas! he had no Presedent:
To warn him of the like Event,
As I have had from Time to Time,
Therefore the greater is my Crime.

While thus he did lamenting stand,
Behold the Servants out of Hand,
Were sent to clear the Table strait,
This led to his unhappy Fate.

For having search'd the cover'd Mess
Which he was never to possess,
And finding that the Mouse was fled,
He to the noble Lord was led.

Who then examin'd him and said,
Wherefore hast thou disobey'd
My just Commands? Come tell me true,
Was I not good and kind to you?

I heard your Groans and piteous Cries,
And saw the Tears drop from your Eyes,
When Adam you was please to blame,
Because thro' him your Labour came.

When you was compass'd with Cares,
As being one of Adam's Heirs
Who suffer'd by his fatal Fall,
I took you in and gave you all.

That e'er your Heart could wish or crave,
Nothing but Pleasure should you have
While in the World you did remain,
If from one Thing you would abstain.

With great Presumption you reply'd,
That my Commands should be your Guide,
These were the very Words you spoke,
Yet now thou hast that Promise broke.

Which has offended me indeed,
Strip off those Royal Robes with speed,
And take your leather Coat once more,
For thou shalt Labour as before.

The poor Man said, I must confess,
'Tis through my own Unworthiness
That I must with these Pleasures part,
Therefore it is my just Desert.

The Nobleman said, prithee go.
And don't reflect on Adam so,
As thou hast done, for as I'm true,
I find a greater Fault in you.



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